Uisce: Compositional Explorations for Various Ensembles

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Sea Gods
for accompanied solo soprano

The Dead
for accompanied SATB chorus with divisi

Waves
for chamber orchestra

by
James May
MUSC 451-452

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirements Of Senior Independent Study in the Department of Music

Supervised by
Jack Gallagher
Department of Music

28 March 2016
Acknowledgements

To Jack Gallagher, who brought me from a point of total incompetency to comfort and excitement in my compositions, and to whom I owe everything I hope to accomplish as a musician.

To Lisa Wong, who has encouraged my musical interest for the past four years, extending guidance and support in ways I could not have imagined.

To Abby Shupe and John Pippen, whose friendship brought me into a new world of music and who have happily continued pushing me to explore.

To Peter Mowrey, The College of Wooster music department, and the APEX Copeland Fund, for ceaselessly giving me the space and means to pursue my interests.

To Norm Chapman, for being among the first people to tell me I could pursue music if I put my mind to it and making sure that I did not give out on myself.

To my parents, siblings, and family, for their love of music and happiness in my work.

To the composers who inspire me with their creativity, especially my fellow Wooster composers: Bridget, Joe, Mitch, Steven, Tori, Emily, Quan, Dan, Jung-Yoon, and Cara.

To everyone else, especially Sarah, Leah, Charlotte, Lauren, Gillian, Mickey, the Wooster Chorus 2012 - 2016, Brittany, Emily, Peter, Mike, Ella, Chelsey, Delia, and Andreja. For four years of humor, fun, support, and love.
Sea Gods

by James May

Text by H.D.

for accompanied solo soprano
SEA GODS by H.D.

I

THEY say there is no hope—
sand—drift—rocks—rubble of the sea—
the broken hulk of a ship,
hung with shreds of rope,
pallid under the cracked pitch.

they say there is no hope
to conjure you—
no whip of the tongue to anger you—
no hate of words
you must rise to refute.

They say you are twisted by the sea,
you are cut apart
by wave-break upon wave-break,
that you are misshapen by the sharp rocks,
broken by the rasp and after-rasp.

That you are cut, torn, mangled,
torn by the stress and beat,
no stronger than the strips of sand
along your ragged beach.

II

But we bring violets,
great masses—single, sweet,
wood-violets, stream-violets,
violets from a wet marsh.

Violets in clumps from hills,
tufts with earth at the roots,
violets tugged from rocks,
blue violets, moss, cliff, river-violets.
Yellow violets' gold,
burnt with a rare tint—
violets like red ash
among tufts of grass.

We bring deep-purple
bird-foot violets.

We bring the hyacinth-violet,
sweet, bare, chill to the touch—
and violets whiter than the in-rush
of your own white surf.

III

For you will come,
you will yet haunt men in ships,
you will trail across the fringe of strait
and circle the jagged rocks.

You will trail across the rocks
and wash them with your salt,
you will curl between sand-hills—
you will thunder along the cliff;—
break—retreat—get fresh strength—
gather and pour weight upon the beach.

You will draw back,
and the ripple on the sand-shelf
will be witness of your track.

O privet-white, you will paint
the lintel of wet sand with froth.

You will bring myrrh-bark
and drift laurel-wood from hot coasts!
when you hurl high—high—
we will answer with a shout.

For you will come,
you will come,
you will answer our taut hearts,
you will break the lie of men's thoughts,
and cherish and shelter us.
Senza misura; very freely

They say there is no hope, sand drifts rocks

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rub-ble of the sea
The bro-ken hulk of a ship hung with shreds of rope,

hit inside bar with yarn mallet

pal-lid un-der the cracked pitch. (tch)

They say there is no hope to con-jure you no

mp agitato
whip of the tongue to anger you
no hate of words you must rise to refute.

They say you are twisted by the sea
you are cut apart by

wave break upon wave break,
that you are misshapen
by the sharp rocks broken by the rasp and after rasp.

That you are cut, torn, mangled torn by the stress and beat no

stronger than the strip of sand along your ragged beach.

That you are cut, torn, mangled torn by the stress and beat no

stronger than the strip of sand along your ragged beach.
Energetically, almost chaotically ($\downarrow = 108$)

Soprano

But we bring vio-

Piano

lets, vio-

lets,

Great masses single, sweet

wood vio-

lets stream vio-

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lets violets from a wet marsh. (sh) Vio

lets in clumps from hills, 

with earth at the roots,
violets tugged from rocks,
blue violets, moss, cliff,

Trance-like ($\frac{1}{4} = 66$)

attack on pitch like a sigh

Yellow violets' gold, burnt (t)
with a rare tint (t)

violets like red ash

among tufts of grass
Excitedly ($q = 108$)

49

$\sum \frac{J}{\sum \left( j \right)}$ 

We, we bring, deep purple bird-foot (t) violets.

56

$\sum \frac{J}{\sum \left( j \right)}$ 

We bring the hyacinth violet

56

$\sum \frac{J}{\sum \left( j \right)}$
sweet, bare, chill to the touch

and violets whiter than the inrush

of your own white surf.

attacca

Ped. after release
catch overtones
Expectantly ($\frac{q}{n} = 76$)

For

P una corda

Ped. ad lib.

you will come, you will yet haunt men in ships, you will trail across the
fringe the fringe of strait
and circle the jagged rocks.
You will trail
across the rocks and wash them with your salt.

you will curl between sand hills.

you will thunder a...
long the cliff break re-treat get fresh strength

(2 + 2 + 2)

(3 + 2)

(3 + 2)

23

(3 + 2 + 2)

(3 + 2)

(2 + 3 + 2)

gather and pour weight up-on the beach. You will
draw back, and the ripple on the sand-shelf will be witness of your
You will bring myrrh bark and

pre-vet-white, you will paint the

track.

lin-tel of wet sand with froth.

cresc.
drift laurel wood from hot coasts!

when you hurl high when you hurl high

we will answer with a shout.
For you will come,

you will come,
You will answer our taut hearts, you will break the lie of men's thoughts, and cherish and shelter us.
The Dead

by James May

Text by James Joyce

for accompanied SATB chorus
A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight.
The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

- from “The Dead” by James Joyce
The Dead

James Joyce

Reflectively (♩ = 66)

Soprano

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window.

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Piano

Thoughtfully (♩ = 60)

S

It had begun to snow again.

A

It had begun to snow again.

T

It had begun to snow again.

B

It had begun to snow again.

Pno.

let ring

express.

Ped. ad lib.

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He watched sleep-ly the flakes, sil-ver and dark, fall-
in-
ging ob-lique-ly a-gainst the lamp-light.

fall-ing a-gainst the lamp-light.

He watched
sleep-i-ly the flakes, sil-ver and dark, falling ob-lige-ly a-gainst the

The time had come for him to set out on his jour-ney

lamp-light. The time had come for him to set out on his jour-ney

(3+2)
Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over.

It was falling on every land.
30

part of the dark central

falling softly

plain, on the treeless hills, on the

darkly up on the Bog up on the Bog of

softly falling into the dark

softly falling into the dark

dark mutinous Shannon waves.

Allen and, farther westward,

It was mutinous Shannon waves.

It was mutinous Shannon waves.

It was

falling, too, upon every part of the

falling too, upon every part of the

falling too, upon every part of the

falling too, upon every part of the

It was
Play bass notes in time.

Avoid consonant intervals. Remain in high register.

Continue playing random notes in similar style.

Play bass notes in time.
Ethereally (\( \dot{d} = 48 \))

S

A

T

B

Pno.

His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling

His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling

His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling
(2 + 3)

Pno.

faintly through the universe and faintly falling like the
dead.

(2 + 3)

Pno.

scent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.
Waves
by James May
for Chamber Orchestra
Title: Waves
Composer: James May
Duration: ca. 5’

Instrumentation:
- Flute (dbl. Alto)
- Oboe
- Clarinet in Bb
- Bassoon
- Trumpet in C
- Horn
- Percussion (1 player)
  - Bass Drum
  - Quad Toms
  - Bongo
  - Vibraphone
  - Crotales
  - Suspended Cymbal
- Harp
- Violin I & II
- Viola
- Cello
- Double Bass

Performance Notes:
- For purposes of balance, woodwinds should sit in front of strings.
- Percussionist will need soft & hard mallets, a triangle beater, and a bow.
- Violas, Cellos, and Bass should strive for continuous sound through rehearsal D and from rehearsal F to end. Moving notes should be played with no beginning change in bow direction. To keep texture active, vary vibrato speeds when permitted.
- In letters D and E, all instruments should accentuate the high point of each statement, phrasing as repeated gestures.
- All crotale attacks should decay naturally.
Harm. gliss on I and II
Freely, no exact pitch